



**Minute of Clyde Ferry Users Group Meeting (FUG)
(Arran, Bute, Cumbrae, Cowal, Dunoon)**

**Held at Kingarth Hotel, Isle of Bute
11:30 21 August 2009**

IN ATTENDANCE

STRATHCLYDE PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORT (SPT)

Mr Bryan Tennant

HITRANS

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre
Mr Ranald Robertson

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

Cllr George White (Chair)

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL

Cllr Len Scoullar
Cllr Bruce Marshall
Ms Moya Ingram

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (FERRIES DIVISION)

Mr Brian Wither

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE (CalMac)

Mr Lawrie Sinclair
Mr Phil Preston
Mr Alasdair Henderson
Mr Robbie Brown
Mr Brian Fulton

CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD (CMAL)

Mr Guy Platten

FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION (FTA)

Mr Ninian McAllister

ROAD HAULAGE ASSOCIATION (RHA)

Mr Donald Bannatyne

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Davie McLachlan
Cllr Alex Gallagher
Cllr Ronnie Ahlfeld
Cllr Margie Currie
Mr David Cannon
Mr Des Bradley
Mrs Fay Harris
Mr Mike Dean
Mr Alistair Dobson
Ms Judith Ainsley

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

As Cllr MacIntyre had been delayed en route to the meeting Cllr White agreed to Chair the meeting.

Cllr Scoullar had notified HITRANS that he would miss the start of the meeting as he had to attend a funeral but would attend as much of the meeting as possible.

The Chair noted it was disappointing that North Ayrshire Council could not be represented at the meeting today and asked HITRANS to establish whether deputies for Cllrs Currie and Gallagher could be agreed in the event they could not attend.

Action: Randal agreed to check the Terms of Reference of the Group and if possible contact North Ayrshire Council to advise them that substitutes can be sent in the event of regular members being unable to attend.

ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting

The minute was **approved** as a correct reflection of the meeting.

ITEM 2: Matters Arising

The Chair asked for a status update on the Largs Pier works.

Guy Platten advised that Largs Pier is nearing completion. The facility will be opened on the 10th September by Princess Ann, and invites have been sent out for this event.

ITEM 3: Scottish Government Ferry Review

Brian Wither provided an update on the Scottish Ferry Review advising that the first round of consultation has been completed. Various surveys have been undertaken and results are being fed into the various comprehensive work packages. Consultants have been engaged to do various pieces of work and draft reports should have

been provided by 1st September. Whatever conclusions come out of these will be fed into draft strategy. The draft strategy is due to be completed by the end of the year and Scottish Government hope to make this available for public consultation early in 2010.

Cllr White indicated that there was a perception that while there are regular Scottish Ferries Review (SFR) meetings but there is at times a perception that no action plan comes out from these.

Brian confirmed that the first stage has been more about information gathering but the next stages will be more pointed to future investment strategies.

Guy Platten added that CMAL have been working on a 10 to 20 year future spending plan and this will feed into the Strategic Spending Review through the Scottish Ferries Review.

Cllr Marshall asked if there was any update on the status of vessel replacement on the Tarbert to Portavadie crossing as this had been mentioned at a previous meeting?

Lawrie Sinclair and Guy Platten explained this is being considered through the INTERREG IVA Small Vessel collaborative project. This will initially look at vessel design and feasibility and is preparatory to submitting proposals to the EU to part fund vessels in the future.

ITEM 4: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update

Robbie Brown provided an operational service update on Arran and Cumbrae region. Operational services update covering the period to the end of July 2009, performance reports and statistics were issued prior to meeting. Robbie reported that currently passenger figures are holding up well against the equivalent period last year.

Brian Fulton provided an operational service update on the Upper Clyde region. Operational services update covering the period to the end of July 2009, performance reports and statistics were issued prior to meeting.

Cllr Marshall asked if the performance reports and statistics on the Gourock- Dunoon service could also be circulated to members.

Brian confirmed he would arrange for the relevant reports to be circulated.

ITEM 5: Public Transport Operational Update

Moya Ingram provided details of the improvements introduced by Argyll & Bute Council in the contracted bus services in Bute. This has returned encouraging results with a 5% passenger increase recorded. The Council are aware of the loss of the Mount Stuart service which is not believed to be commercially viable while an approach made to Mount Stuart did not prove helpful in identifying funding to re-establish the service.

Bryan Tennant reported that Gourock – Helensburgh – Kilcreggan has recorded improved passenger figures. There are some anti-social behavior problems and Argyll & Bute Council have been approached to provide a CCTV camera at Helensburgh pier.

Ranald Robertson read out details received from and on behalf of Des Bradley, First ScotRail, advising an increase in sales of through tickets from last year, also two new platforms being provided at Glasgow central, formally platform 11a, and Des will be meeting with CalMac in September.

ITEM 6: AOCB

Donald Bannatyne raised the issue of the lack of consistency provided to this meeting as a result of the appointed Chair, Cllr McLachlan, being absent at the majority of meetings to date. In practice Cllr White has now been asked to Chair the meeting on a number of occasions and it would be better for the group if Cllr White could assume this role permanently.

Ranald Robertson advised that the Ferry User Group Terms of Reference state that the Chair of each group should be board member of SPT or HITRANS.

Donald Bannatyne suggested the Terms of Reference need to be changed in that case.

Cllr MacIntyre advised that when these consultation groups were established by former Minister of Transport Tavish Scott, it was stipulated that the Chair of this group should be board member of SPT, and all other groups be chaired by a board member of HITRANS. This has been effective for the other groups but HITRANS acknowledge that the Chairing of the Clyde Group has been inconsistent in the past.

Action: HITRANS to take back to SPT the genuine concern of the Clyde Ferry User Group members that no consistent Chair has been provided for this group and to seek a commitment from SPT to address this issue.

ITEM 7: Date of Next Meeting

Cllr MacIntyre agreed to an additional meeting of the Clyde Ferry User Group to be arranged to discuss the way forward on the Gourock – Dunoon service once the European Commission

reported its findings on tendering of this route. This would provisionally be set for Friday 9th December but if no clear announcement is made it was agreed that the meeting would be postponed until more information was available.

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting in the normal cycle would be held on Friday 12th February 2010 at 11:00 at the Glynhill Hotel, Renfrew.